

# Good citizenship

Business



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Many students around the country sit in school and think, “ What’s the point of going to school?” Many teachers may even think, “ Why do I teach? What am I really teaching my students?” In Eleanor Roosevelt’s brief commentary “ Good Citizenship: The Purpose of Education”, she pushes her readers to think beyond the accepted definition of education by presenting them with a more unorthodox way of looking at how education can shape a person. She states that to most students, teachers, and parents, education is merely just “ the acquisition of knowledge, the reading of books, and the learning of facts” (1 Roosevelt). However, Roosevelt goes on to quote the Archbishop of York by saying that “ the true purpose of education is to produce citizens... [that are] informed and intelligent... [with the understanding that] we are all responsible for the trend of thought and the action of our times” (1 Roosevelt).

Education molds students to be good citizens and subsequently, molds the country and world that revolves around the students. Eleanor Roosevelt’s description of education is correct. If citizens are not educated and aware of the world around them, then they are not really doing their job as a citizen. If there are any problems within the government or within the country in general, citizens should all work together to better the nation. In Malala Yousafzai’s autobiography, she explains her father’s dream of having his own school and reasons why.

She says, “ He believed that the lack of education was the root of all Pakistan’s problems. Ignorance allowed politicians to fool people and bad administrators to be re-elected” (Yousafzai). Malala’s father essentially said that people need education because otherwise they are fooled by politicians

and just follow the pattern, not bothering to question it or go against it, but we need education in order to find the truth behind the mask government officials or the media might put on. Dr. Martin Luther King also explains that we need to fight the lies told by the government that many people just accept when King states, “ To save man from the morass of propaganda...is one of the chief aims of education” (King).

Roosevelt also says that because the average citizen is “ too indifferent to exert himself to get better men in office” there are many unsolved problems within the country” (1 Roosevelt). People may not speak out about problems because they are indifferent or do not care, but also due to the fact that they are unaware of these problems. Starting from as a child, one must learn about the world in which he lives in and what systems it runs on to “ fit into the pattern[s] and where his own usefulness may lie” (1 Roosevelt).

However, if the only things children learn is knowledge about the world in which they live in without morals or compassion for their peers, they will not be useful members of society. This concept is best explained by Dr.

Martin Luther King when he states, “ The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason, but with no morals” (King). Although some could argue children could learn morals or compassion outside of school, Roosevelt argues that the other aspects of school such as clubs or sports can “ develop team play, cooperation, and thought and consideration for others” (2 Roosevelt). She then goes on to talk about a teacher that made a deep impact on her and influenced her. Roosevelt especially emphasizes how it was not the real class work that impacted her, it was how the teacher reacted if she knew her students could do better which pushed them more.

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School and the experiences a person can gain from their educational journey are incredibly important to a child's social interactions and how they will act later on within society.

In the words of John Dewey, an American philosopher, " The purpose of education has always been... to give the young the things they need in order to develop in an orderly, sequential way into members of society" (" What Is the Purpose of Education?"). School and education in general is meant to teach people to become productive members of society, but others actually state that it can hinder a student's ability to do so. Maria Montessori states, " ... we [teachers] do not respect our children. We try to force them to follow us ... We are overbearing with them ... and then we expect them to be submissive and well-behaved..." (Montessori). However, Montessori's words are far from the truth because to be frank, children until they reach their teenage years can't be completely trusted to make important decisions by themselves so teachers at school as well as parents are like a helping hand until children reach that stage in their life.

According to the ASCD Committee on Platform of Belief, " The main purpose of the American school is to provide [an environment] for the fullest possible development of each learner for living morally, creatively, and productively in a democratic society" (" What is The Purpose of Education?"). Schools are not meant to limit a student's rights but rather help them by pushing them a little bit even though they may be unhappy at times in order to increase the number of opportunities for the student in the future. Our education may be something that does not have a big impact on a person's everyday life or something we take for granted, but in reality, it is very important and

decides the students' futures as well as the future of the society in which they live in. Roosevelt's flipped perspective on education opens the eyes of readers and urges them to take their education very seriously as schooling does not just teach students arithmetic or history, but lets them gain experiences that will shape who they are and become. Ultimately, education is necessary for people to become useful, productive citizens that will be informed and intelligent and help better their country.